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E.O. 12065: RDS-1 1/21/02 (BARRETT, ROBERT S) OR-M

TAGS: OREP (PERCY, CHARLES H) PEPR, LE, US, IS

SUBJ: SENATOR PERCY'S VISIT TO LEBANON: DISCUSSIONS OF US-
ISRAELI-PLO RELATIONS

1. (S-ENTIRE TEXT)

2. DURING DISCUSSIONS OF THE US RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL ON JANUARY 20, BOTH PRESIDENT SARKIS AND FORMER PRIME MINISTER SA'B SALAM TOLD SENATOR PERCY THAT RESUMING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MOU WOULD HAVE AN EXTREMELY BAD EFFECT THROUGHOUT THE REGION. IT WOULD DISCOURAGE MODERATE ARAB GOVERNMENTS, LESSEN THE INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL FIGURES FRIENDLY TO THE UNITED STATES, AND STRENGTHEN THE HAND OF THE REJECTION FRONT. PRESIDENT SARKIS MADE IT A POINT TO SAY THAT HE RECOGNIZED THE USG'S GENERAL COMMITMENT TO ISRAEL AND THAT MOST ARAB GOVERNMENTS WERE NOW PREPARED TO ACCEPT THE EXISTENCE OF THE ISRAELI STATE, BUT EVEN AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND REACTIVATION OF THE MOU OR AN INCREASE IN AMERICAN ASSISTANCE TO ISRAEL WOULD HAVE A SUBSTANTIAL NEGATIVE AFFECT ON AMERICAN INTERESTS IN THE REGION.

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3. PRIME MINISTER AL-AZZAN DID NOT ADDRESS THE QUESTION OF THE MOU WHEN DISCUSSING THE SUBJECT OF ISRAEL, BUT SPOKE INSTEAD OF THE DESIRABILITY OF THE USG'S ESTABLISHING CONTACT WITH THE PLO. HE SAID THIS COULD SHORTEN THE ROAD TO PEACE IN THE REGION AND WOULD DISCOMFIT THOSE PARTIES, SUCH AS THE USSR, WHICH THRIVE ON THE PRESENT INSTABILITY OF THE AREA AND DEPEND UPON IT TO ADVANCE THEIR INTERESTS.
DILLON

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